

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4950
ANSWERED ON:20.12.2000
ERADICATION OF POVERTY THROUGH INFOTECH
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Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have any scheme to use new technologies like 'infotech' for the eradication of poverty in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the measures proposed to be taken to face the challenges posed by the ever increasing number of internet users particularly in the next few years?

Answer

MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN)

(a) and (b): Harnessing of Information Technology(IT) is a continuous process. Some of the on-going efforts include:-

- Computerisation of a variety of applications right upto the district level supported by a nationwide computer network called NICNET.
- Encouragement to all Central Ministries/Departments to spend upto 3% of their budget on IT.
- Progressive emphasis by State and Central Governments to introduce e-governance, thus leading to increased efficiency and transparency.
- In North Eastern Region, community information centres are being set up at all of the 486 blocks.
- In education, use of computers have been promoted:
 - + in schools
 - + skills are being imparted to meet growing IT industry needs and
 - + on-line learning is being introduced to increase number of skilled manpower without degradation in quality.
- A project to generate entrepreneurship through 'Low cost multi-media content creation' launched.
- A pilot village information centre (SAMADHAN CENTRE) project initiated at Tamilnadu to provide information centres to 30-40 panchayats. This will provide information on public health, village level resource map, crop planning, soil conservation and fertility management and water resources planning in addition to imparting computer literacy to the community.
- A unique 'wired villages' pilot project has been implemented at the Warana Nagar cooperative complex in Kolhapur district in Maharashtra.
- Employment generation schemes in North East,
- Encourage widespread use of Indian language interface to computers.
- Increasing the reach of computers and internet at various levels as also making it increasingly affordable. All these and other measures taken will lead to employment generation, skills upgradation, resource optimization, instant and ready access to information without locational barrier.

(c): Government has implemented Internet Service Providers (ISPs) Policy. No licence fee is payable for first five years and nominal fee of one rupee is to be paid after five years. The policy provides for inter-connection of networks and setting up of international gateways and hiring of bandwidth from foreign satellites by the internet service providers independent of VSNL. Further, the infrastructure for Internet is proposed to be upgraded as below:-

- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is setting up national internet backbone in the country.
- Internet Service Providers are allowed to set up last mile linkages freely by fibre optic or by radio communication.

- The Internet access is also allowed through authorised cable TV.